SCENES
From
RAMAYANA.

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RAMAYANA

WITH

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION.

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THE RAMAYANA.

BALAKANDA.

IN the early part of the Thretha Yuga, or second cycle of the universe, there lived in the wild forests a pious sage named Valmiki. One fine morning, on his usual resort to the riverside to perform his daily ablution in the waters of the *Tamasa* in company with his faithful disciple Bharadwaja, this devout sage was struck aghast at the sight beside his path of a mortally wounded *Crouncha* bird—the victim of a cruel hunter's bow and arrow—and the hunter himself in posture jubilant over his fallen prey (Ill. 1). It sent through the sage's soft heart a thrill of pity and horror. He scarcely could subdue his agitated feelings, and in the impulse of the moment pronounced upon the merciless hunter a curse. That curse fell from his lips in the form of a *Sloka* in metrical perfection. In silent self-astonishment stood the sage for a while; then, turning round to his disciple, confessed that the Sloka was an *extempore* composition divinely inspired.

The Lord Brahma came on a visit to Valmiki and declared unto the venerable sage that by divine inspiration he would acquire a complete knowledge of the life-history of Rama, which, however, he was enjoined to record in writing, omitting not even the smallest incident therein. Thus divinely inspired Valmiki wrote the *Ramayana*. He recited its countless verses to Lava and Kusa, the sons of Rama, who committed the whole story to memory with miraculous precision and sang the lay from first to last to the strains of music before Rama and his court, much to their delight and astonishment—the boundless joy of Rama in particular over the masterly and melodious delivery of the Slokas by his youthful sons enrapturing him in a reverie (Ill. 2). [And thus has been handed

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down to posterity, on the one hand, a masterpiece of Sanskrit literature on the epic side of poetry, and, on the other, the moral to be gathered fom its teeming pages—that virtue wins in spite of all vicissitudes.]

THE STORY.

In days of yore there lived and ruled in Ayodhia (the modern Oudh) a king named Dasaratha who, although he had attained an age said to have covered more than six hundred centuries, unhappily had no issue by any of his three royal consorts. In his solicitude for the acquisition of sons to perpetuate his lineage and to inherit his vast dominions the king held a consultation with Visishta Mahamuni, his Guru, who counselled his royal disciple to offer up a horse sacrifice (*aswameda*) in order that, thus propitiated, the gods may condescend to gratify his desire for male offspring *(puthrakameshti)*. The royal disciple gladly acquiesced in the Guru's proposal; all necessary preliminaries were forthwith arranged, and with befitting solemnity the sacrifice was most devoutly offered (Ill. 3). On its completion there evolved from out of the sacrificial flames Prajapatya with a vase of gold in hand containing nectar and ambrosia which he offered to the king. Piously the king received the sacred vessel (Ill. 4) and of the precious contents thereof he gave one-half to his senior consort Kausalya, one-fourth to his second consort Kaikeyi, and the remainder to his third consort Sumithra. Piously also did the queens partake of the food and drink of the gods. In due course they conceived, and at auspicious hours they bore sons unto the king—Kausalya brought forth a son named Rama, the hero of these pages; Kaikeyi, a son named Bharatha, and Sumit hra two sons named, respectively, Lakshmana and Satrughna. Lakshmana always showed an inalienable attachment towards Rama, and a like attachment sprang up in Satrughna towards Bharatha.

The princes had scarcely attained their twelfth year when one day the royal sage Viswamithra approached Dasaratha, protesting that his daily oblation to the gods was being wantonly disturbed by certain Rakshasas and entreating that, to perform his sacrifice unmolested, he may be allowed the company of Rama at his cottage to keep the miscreants under restraint. The king was loth to comply with this request (Ill. 5) for Rama was both tender in years and a novice to the stratagems of the Rakshasas and their methods of warfare. Indignantly the royal sage half retraced his steps, remarking that both Dasaratha and his Guru knew full well the latent capabilities of Rama, and hinting that the king's apparent reluctance was unworthy of royal personages. Dasaratha was touched to the quick by this sarcastic rebuke. He instantly, yet reluctantly, let Rama follow Viswamithra, and, needless to say, his inseparable brother Lakshmana followed him.

On foot the young princes set out with Viswamithra for the far distant *asrama* of the latter. *En route* the royal sage put the princes through a course of practice with the bow and arrow (Ill. 6). He further initiated them in two sacred *manthrams* most potential in their counteracting effect on hunger, thirst and the fatigue of journey. Two days and nights the trio passed in travel. On the third night they enocountered a Rakshasi named Tadaka whom Rama forthwith slew at Viswamithra's word of command (Ill. 7) and finally they reached the *asrama.*

Arrived at his cottage, Viswamithra resumed his sacrifice, and soon the mischievous Rakshasas were on the scene. Two of them—Maricha and Subbahu—from up in the air emptied potsful of blood over the rising flames of the sacrifice and on the head and face of the devout sage (Ill. 8). Enraged at the sight of this daring sacrilege Rama let fly his deadly darts which precipitated the miscreant Rakshasas to the earth. One was killed outright; the other Rama

flung into the bottomless depths of the ocean beyond. And thus the royal sage was enabled to bring his sacrifice to a satisfactory termination.

Viswamithra now proposed to the young princes to proceed on a visit to Janaka, King of Mithila, who at the time was engaged on a holy sacrifice, and accordingly they all set out for Mithila. Through labyrinths of dense forests, a long journey brought them to the borders of the Ganges. The sight of its silvery waters expanding far and wide in solemn silence, and meandering in so many directions struck the young princes with a profound sense of admiration when Viswamithra narrated to them how, in response to the prayer of Bhagiratha in connection with an *aswameda* performed once upon a time by King Sagara, the Lord Siva let fall from his head this sacred river which on reaching the earth divided itself into seven streams (Ill. 9). They crossed its holy waters and, proceeding further, sighted the *asrama* of Gautama where they decided to step in for a while. They crossed its threshold when lo! there rose to view from under the ground a fair damsel (Ill. 10) to the great astonishment of the princes! Soon the sage unfolded the mystery and set their excited minds at rest. The fair damsel, said he, was no other than Ahalya the wife of Gautama whom, ages ago, the curse of her husband transmogrified into a stone, because of her unchastity, and who by the contact of Rama's sacred feet with the dust of that stone was purged of her past iniquities and restored to life in fulfilment of a phrophecy of Gautama.

Arrived at Mithila they found the king offering up his sacrifice, which over, Viswamithra presented the lads at the Court of Janaka formally introducing them as the sons of King Dasaratha and announcing at the same time their ardent desire to have a glimpse of the celebrated Bow of Siva which lay in the archives of the Mithila palace, there treasured and preserved for the avowed purpose of testing the prowess of royal personages.

The king revealed to the sage a resolution of his to the effect that whosoever of royal descent proved himself capable of wielding this almighty bow would be rewarded with a prize no less than his handsome daughter Sita in marriage. So saying he commanded the box containing the bow to be brought. Eight sturdy attendants of the king with all their might and main dragged the burdensome box of bow and arrows to the royal presence where, besides the royal sage and princes, were gathered a vast assembly of palace officials, purohits and retainers. At Viswamithra's beck Rama lifted the bow with perfect ease and alacrity and proceeded to bend and string it when behold! the mighty weapon, under the strain of Rama's inspired strength, broke asunder with a mighty crash as of a thunderbolt to the utter bewilderment of all present (Ill. 11). Janaka was agreebly surprised and awe-struck at this and instantly set about not only to accomplish his promise with regard to Sita but also to give his other daughter Urmila in marriage to Lakshmana. Viswamithra being consulted with regard to the preliminaries advised Janaka to invite Dasaratha and his other two sons at Ayodhya to the court of Mithila. They duly arrived and at an auspicious hour of the day all the four sons of Dasaratha were united in matrimony in right royal fashion—Rama to Sita, Lakshmana to Urmila, and Bharatha and Satrughna to Mandavi and Sruthakirthi, respectively, the nieces of Janaka (Ill. 12).

The marriage celebrations over, Dasaratha and his wedded sons with their royal consorts took their departure for Ayodhya. *En route* they met Parasurama whose jealousy was roused at the imposing spectacle of Rama escorting home the fair princess of Mithila. He forthwith defied Rama to wield the all-powerful Bow of Vishnu. With extraordinary pluck and dash the intrepid Rama seized the weapon and aimed (Ill. 13); then demanded of Parasurama to say whither he shall let fly his arrow, for he could not brook the idea

of his aim going unavailed. Discomfited over his bombastic challenge Parasurama went his way, sarcastically telling Rama to aim at and destroy his divine power. Dasaratha, Rama and the rest, pursuing their homeward journey, reached Ayodhya in due course where Rama and Sita lived many a long day together in the enjoyment of the highest connubial bliss.

AYODHYAKANDA.

Bharatha was absent on a visit to his maternal grandfather accompanied by Satrughna when one day Dasaratha, gray with years and care-worn with the affairs of his kingdom, conceived the idea of placing Rama on the throne of Ayodhya. In solemn conclave he consulted his ministers, courtiers and subjects (Ill. 15) who with one voice hailed the king's proposal with acclamation. The palace purohits were accordingly enjoined to have everything in readiness for Rama's coronation the following day. The news spread like wildfire over the city which soon was gay and resplendent with decorations and illuminations in honor of the coming event, and as a necessary preliminary the king-elect and his fair spouse retired to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the palace temple in company with the chief purohit to spend the eve of the coronation in silent supplication and fasting (Ill. 14).

Mischievous Manthara, a decrepit old maid-servant of Kaikeyi secretly set about to frustrate the king's intentions. Breathless she hastened to Kaikeyi's apartments in the palace (Ill. 16) and broached to her royal mistress the news of the preparations that were proceeding apace for Rama's coronation which, said she, foreboded evil times for the queen because with Rama's elevation to the throne his mother Kausalya would of course take precedence in the ranks of the royal household and as a matter of consequence the other queens would have to submit themselves to the humiliating position of next in rank to Kausalya.

With seeming unconcern the queen listened to her old maid's premonitions, for, thought she to herself, the remedy lay in her own hands. Did not Dasaratha during the war between the Rakshasas and Devatas solemnly promise to grant her at any time she liked any two boons of her own sweet choice? This then was the opportunity for her to demand the promised boons, and demand them she would in manner designed to defeat the King's calculations with regard to Rama and secure the crown for her son Bharatha, thereby averting the evil forebodings of her maid Manthara. Thus resolved, Kaikeyi cast aside the costly jewels which adorned her person and, affecting a sullen mood, retired into her private apartments.

Rejoicing came Dasaratha to relate to his fair spouse Kaikeyi the glad tidings of Rama's forthcoming coronation when lo! the sullen queen, stepping gently forward (Ill. 17), reminded the king of his unfulfilled promise of old and demanded of him two boons—(1) the banishment of Rama to the forest, and (2) the elevation of her son Bharatha to the throne. For a moment the king was dumbfounded; then prostrating himself before the fair queen (Ill. 18) said he: "Anything save your present demands which I scarce can yield as the preparations for Rama's coronation are far too advanced." But the queen was inexorable.

With painful reluctance Dasaratha acquainted Rama of the preposterous demands of Kaikeyi but the dutiful son was not for contesting the matter. With true filial submission he accepted a forest life for himself and cheerfully acquiesced in the accession of Bharatha to the throne.

Perfectly resigned to the situation Rama gently broached the matter to his mother. It plunged Kausalya in tears and sorrow, at the sight of which Lakshmana threatened the cruel monarch's life but the wiser counsels of Rama prevailed (Ill. 19). Kausalya then resolved to cast in her lot with her ill-fated

son and insisted upon accompanying him to the forest. Rama, with paternal solicitude, counselled his disconsolate mother to remain behind and tend the age-worn king, promising to return from the forest after fourteen years.

Next Rama went into his own apartments in the palace and to his fair spouse Sita broached the appalling news of his banishment to the forest, admonishing her also to remain behind till his return after fourteen years. But the faithful wife would brook no separation from her husband for all the world and firmly resolved to follow him to the forest, and needless to say, the ever inseparable brother Lakshmana decided also to accompany him.

Thus resolved Rama, Sita and Lakshmana repaired to the palace and took leave of Dasaratha (Ill. 20). Sad was the parting as the king in tears trickling down the wrinkles on his care-worn countenance bade farewell to his dutiful children—but alas! how sadder still, if but the king knew that that was his last farewell to them.

In the royal chariot departed Rama, Sita and Lakshmana for the forest (Ill. 21) and in its rear followed a surging crowd of loyal subjects weeping bitterly. The shades of night began to fall and Rama betook himself to the foot of a forest tree to rest a while. His wailing subjects, weary with hunger and fatigue, fell soon in slumbers deep. Unperceived by them he resumed the journey, the chariot moving gently on till the party reached Sringiberapuram where Guha the chieftain of that place received them with marked hospitality, and Lakshmana unfolded to the generous host the sad tale of Rama's banishment to the forest.

Next morning Guha placed a boat at the disposal of his distinguished guests and in it Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, having said farewell to Sumanthira the charioteer, crossed the waters of the Ganges (Ill. 22)

Their first night in the forest they spent under a banyan tree, Lakshmana by special direction of Rama keeping a vigilant look-out for the safety and protection of Sita (Ill. 23). Next day the exiles reached the *asrama* of the sage Bharadwaja with whose consent (Ill. 24) they pursued the weary travel to their final destination—the valley of the Chitrakoota mountain—where, perfectly resigned to the situation, they entered upon their forest life.

Meanwhile Sumanthra hastened back with his tale of sorrow to Ayodhya. Hooted on every side by the citizens as they gazed with disappointment upon the vacant chariot, he contrived to reach the palace and, prostrating himself before his royal master, began to render a faithful account of the incidents of his journey with the princes and fair Sita up to the parting on the banks of the Ganges. A whole night did it take him to narrate it all and a whole night did the king patiently listen to it. It broke his heart. No longer could he endure the pang of separation from his exiled children, and as day dawned, the venerable monarch of Ayodhya passed away in peace, and " Rama, Rama," were the last words that fell from his dying lips.

Bharatha was recalled from his visit to the kingdom of the Kaikeyas. He saw all Ayodhya wear an aspect of gloom and melancholy as he re-entered the city. Arrived at the palace he hastened to the apartments of his father, only to find him missing there, and then to his mother's apartments where, prostrating himself before her (Ill. 25), he made anxious enquiries about Dasaratha, Rama and others. Then was disclosed to him the painful intelligence of Rama's banishment and Dasaratha's death. He was deeply moved and fell into a swoon. When consciousness returned to him Bharatha's rage knew no bounds. He cursed his mother, and, seizing Manthara by her hair, would have taken away her life but for Kaikeyi intervening (Ill. 26). Then, having performed the obsequies of his father, he called together his subjects and publicly rebuked the palace

purohit Vasishta for not counselling Dasaratha against Rama's banishment, after which he decided (Ill. 27) to go in search of Rama along with Satrughna and the widowed queens and accompanied by the army. They met Guha the hunter chieftain of whom they made enquiries and were shewn the spot where Rama passed the first night in the forest under a tree, whereat Bharata fainted away and the three widowed queens stood gazing in mute astonishment (Ill. 28). Proceeding on, they met the Sage Bharadwaja (Ill. 29) who received them with marked hospitality, and, having ascertained from him the exact spot where Rama was, they pursued the journey in the direction of the Chitrakoota mountain. In the far distant horizon they saw rise on high a hut thatched with leaves and twining branches and from a tree-top beside that hut (Ill. 30) Lakshmana, espying from afar the multitude from Ayodhya approach, with Bharata in the forefront, informed Rama of it saying he feared Bharata was bent on giving further trouble besides taking possession of the kingdom, but Rama allayed his anxieties assuring him that Bharata's mission could scarcely be fraught with any ulterior designs. Soon the brothers Bharata and Satrughna were at the cottage door where, having prostrated themselves before Rama and Sita (Ill. 31), Bharata prayed that Kaikeyi may be forgiven for the part she played in bringing about the banishment of Rama. He then disclosed the sad news of Dasaratha's death whereat Rama was deeply affected and forthwith repaired to the waters of the Godavari where he performed the obsequies of his father (Ill. 32). Then in the presence of the whole assemblage from Ayodhya Bharata solemnly besought Rama to return and assume charge of his kingdom but Rama would not be persuaded to do so. Bharata then prayed for the gift of Rama's sandals, which being granted, he returned to Ayodhya with the people in devout processional order, bearing the sandals on his head (Ill. 33) as a token of Rama's supremacy over the kingdom and then moved on, in the same order and with the sandals still on his head, to Nandigrama (Ill. 34) where he solemnly enthroned them.

ARANYAKANDA.

With the departure of Bharata the exiles ventured out into the forest and soon discovered that it was a veritable haunt of wild beasts and Rakshasas. Their first encounter was with the demon Viradha who made a dash across the forest carrying away the princes on his gigantic shoulders, but the valiant youths, at one stroke of the sword, severed both his arms (Ill. 35). The *asrama* of Sarabhanga was now reached. This venerable sage gave the princes an account of the depredations of the Rakshasas in those regions and exhorted them to visit other *asramas* also in the neighbourhood. He was so delighted to see the distinguished visitors that he consigned his mortal coil to the flames, when behold! he was transformed into a youth of radiant hue and ascended to the heavens in a celestial car, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana gazing on in rapturous astonishment (Ill. 36). Sages from all directions sought the annihilation of these wicked demons by Rama's hands. Jatayu, an old friend of Dasaratha, expressed the same wish also, offering his assistance as well, but Sita was averse to it so long as Rama was unmolested. The exiles now reached Panchavati where they erected a cottage and settled down there.

One day Rama and Sita were seated at the portals of the cottage when the Rakshasi maiden Surpanakha approached Rama with intent to win his affections, but Rama rejected her love-making with contempt (Ill. 37). Indignant at the sight of Surpanakha persisting in her overtures to Rama, Lakshmana seized and disfigured her by cutting off her nose and one ear (Ill. 38). Bleeding she ran for the help of her brothers Khara, Dooshana and Thrisiras who with a host of armed Rakshasas met Rama and Lakshmana in a pitched battle in which the former were slain wholesale in half an hour. Terrified at the dexterous use of the bow and arrow by Rama and Lakshmana, Surpanakha sought the aid of her brother Ravana (Ill. 39). To avenge the cruel deed of Lakshmana and the blood of her three

brothers slain in battle, she suggested the adoption of some device to separate Sita from Rama as the most effective method of wreaking her vengeance. For this Ravana sought the aid of Maricha who, however, confessed he was no match for Rama and he was further averse to any base design such as was suggested by Surpanakha, but Ravana insisted on it.

In the guise of a wonderful deer of golden hue and milk-white specks came Maricha one day browsing in the vicinity of the cottage garden at Panchavati where Rama and Sita were gathering flowers (Ill. 40). Sita became enamoured of the charming beast and longed for its company and Rama set out to capture it. Lakshmana sounded a note of warning that the animal might be some deceitful Rakshasa in disguise for the nonce. Rama pursued it to some distance and then, pierced by Rama's deadly shaft, Maricha (the seeming deer) fell, disgorging a monster of a Rakshasa, and, crying aloud in Rama's feigned accents, "save me Lakshmana or I die," he breathed his last (Ill. 41). Those dying words fell on the ears of Sita who repeated them to Lakshmana and the latter, though quite certain of Rama's safety, was persuaded to go to his brother's aid. Thus came the opportunity (for Sita was all alone then) for the ten-headed Ravana, the king of all the Rakshasas and lord of Lanka, who now took possession of the cottage and by all manner of means endeavoured to entice her away. Unyielding, she treated him with scorn and warned him of the unrelenting vengeance of her lord and master Rama (Ill. 42). But unheeding, Ravana seized her and carried her away in his aerial car. The moaning aloft of Sita brought Jatayu to her aid and a hot contest ensued. The king of vultures fought with beak and talons, rent Ravana's hair and wrecked the royal car (Ill. 43). In the conflict he lost his wings and fell, and Ravana pursued his flight with Sita, who in the confusion lost hold of a garment with some ornaments which fell into the hands of a Vanara host assembled on a hill-top in the forest. Arrived at Lanka, the Rakshasa king

resumed his amorous overtures to Sita, and being discarded more than ever, he ordered her to be kept in confinement at the foot of an Asoka tree in the vicinity of the palace, strictly watched by a guard of Rakshasi monsters.

Rama's first thoughts were as to Sita's safety when he saw Lakshmana coming in search of him. He paused only to point out the danger of her lonesome situation, and back to the cottage hied the brothers in breathless haste. They searched far and near and looked all around but alas! the cottage was empty and Sita was *non est* (Ill. 44). Pursuing the search through hill and dale and wood and vale they saw Jatayu gasping on the ground—a pile of feathers with no wings (Ill. 45)—and from his dying accents gathered the tidings of Ravana's elopement with Sita and how his wings were hewn down in a contest to rescue Sita. "In a southerly direction," said Jatayu, "has Sita been carried away," and in that direction the brothers resumed their search. Soon they were seized by the headless monster Kabandha with a mighty trunk and arms a league in length, whom they disabled by cutting off his hands (Ill. 46). Kabandha advised the princes to search out and make friends with Sugriva at the Rushimuka mountain, with whose aid they would succeed in tracing out Sita. Roaming through the woods they met the aged Sabari who with fruit and water (Ill. 47) welcomed them. Gladly they partook of this hospitality and made their way to Sugriva's abode in the Rushimuka mountain.

KISHKINTHAKANDA.

With troubled hearts the princes reached the banks of the Pampa river where they halted for a while, meditating and sympathising with one another over the fate of Sita and their fruitless search (Ill. 48). Proceeding further, they saw Hanuman, in the guise of an ascetic, whom the banished King of Kishkintha had deputed to meet them (Ill. 49). Lakshmana briefly narrated the events that

went before and said that he and his brother were anxious to find out Sugriva's abode, whereupon Hanuman, assuming his natural form, carried the princes on his ponderous shoulders to the presence of Sugriva (Ill. 50). Seated on tender sandal leaves and branches the brothers narrated what had befallen Sita and what brought them thither, when Sugriva handed them the robe and ornaments picked up by the Vanaras from the forest, which with many a sob and sigh Rama recognised as those of Sita (Ill. 51). Then with every assurance of help in discovering the whereabouts of Sita, Sugriva in turn sought Rama's aid to get back his kingdom and his wife, the tyranny of his brother Vali having deprived him of both. Rama readily assented, but Vali was a man of gigantic build and possessed of extraordinary physical powers, and Sugriva wanted to make sure if Rama was likely to be a match for him. To this end he referred Rama to the valiant feat of Vali who not only killed the monster Dundhubi but flung his cumbersome carcass across to the summit of the Rushimuki mountain where it then lay. Rama lightly raised the corpse with his foot and despatched it twenty leagues across the air (Ill. 52). But that was a comparatively easy task, thought Sugriva, for the corpse, now reduced to mere skin and bone by long exposure on the mountain-top, was not the massive flesh that Vali handled immediately he took the life out of it. A fairer test of Rama's prowess was necessary, and pointing to seven huge Sala trees standing in line at some distance beyond, Sugriva asked Rama if he was able to bring one of them down at a single shot. Up with his bow, Rama let fly an arrow which pierced through and cleft all the seven trees and penetrated into the hill that rose towering behind (Ill. 53). Dubious no longer of Rama's latent strength and capabilities, Sugriva marched upon his tyrant brother Vali. Fiercely and with wrath unrelenting the Vanara brothers fought and wrestled till Rama, from behind a tree, despatched a deadly shaft towards his comrade's foe (Ill. 54). Pierced by it the mighty Vali fell (Ill. 55) and Tara his wife beat her breast and wept aloud over her fallen lord.

Kingdom and wife were thus restored to Sugriva and the Vanars brought water from every holy river and sea and poured it on Sugriva in holy consecration (Ill. 56). Days passed and passed, yet the promised help from Sugriva was not forthcoming for tracing out the missing Sita. Enraged at Sugriva's inactive slumber Lakshmana rushed to the palace, where Tara assuaged his anger and led him to the presence of her lord (Ill. 57). Sugriva instantly called together the Vanars, who mustered by the million at his behest, and despatched them in batches, each with a leader, in all directions in quest of Sita. A whole month they searched, but searched in vain, and all returned with the exception of the batch led by Hanuman, to whom was entrusted the signet ring of Rama for identification by Sita, and who with his party had proceeded in a southerly direction. These, after exploring hills and dales and clumps and bushes, came upon a yawning cavern, and tightly holding Hanuman's tail they entered it and wandered through the gloom in eager search (Ill. 58). Within the cavern rose to their view a strange place, a wonderful garden of golden trees with lotus-covered pools and stately mansions, and here they were greeted with fruit and water by an aged woman—the self-luminant Swayamprabha (Ill. 58-A). But the Vanaras, once inside the cave, were doomed to lose their way out. Swayamprabha directed them to move on with eyes blindfolded with the palms of their hands, and when eventually they opened their eyes they found themselves on the summit of the Vindhya mountain. Here wingless Sampathi, Jatayu's brother, seeing the Vanara host almost dying in despair, approached them and heard their sad tale (Ill. 59). On hearing from them of Jatayu's death Sampathi narrated how his wings got burnt and he fell on that mountain top in an attempt to protect his brother's wings from being burnt by the scorching rays of the sun during a flying race, and how, when praying for the restoration of his wings, the sage Nishaka responded, saying that some Vanaras would come his way in pursuit of their search after Sita when he would

get back his wings. The narrative ended, behold! Sampathi's wings were restored, and rejoicing he soared aloft (Ill. 60) saying to the Vanaras: "A hundred and sixty *yojanas* beyond is the island of Lanka whose ruler is Ravana. Go ye there and ye shall find Sita." The Vanaras marched with redoubled vigour. To the sea-side went they fleeting, and each declared his might to leap across the roaring deep (Ill. 61).

SUNDARAKANDA.

Undaunted, Hanuman flew across the boundless ocean—the ever expanding firmaments on high above him and the never ceasing roar of the ocean's billows beneath him—his comrades on the sea-shore looking on with gleeful pride and admiration upon his daring feat (Ill. 62). Midway the Minaka mountain, rising above its submerging waters, offered rest on its summit to the seemingly exhausted monkey chieftain; Hanuman merely touched it and passed on. Yet another obstacle came his way, for Surasa, a demoness possessed of supernatural powers of expanding and contracting herself at will, insisted upon his passing through her mouth, thus to entrap him in his further movements, but, possessed of the same supernatural faculties himself, Hanuman contrived to pursue his flight through the gaping mouth of the demoness as demanded, and finally reached the shores of Lanka. Eluding the vigilance of the city's Rakshasa guards and ingratiating its guardian deity, Hanuman entered it at night-fall, and later, with moonlight's aid, not a Rakshasa's abode nor even the palace of Lanka's lord did he spare in his eager endeavour to seek out Sita, but alas! she was not there nor anywhere. He strayed into a neighbouring forest and, under the shade of an Asoka tree, spied a maiden fair. She wore a lovely lock of hair; her garments were untidy; tears trickled down her cheeks of rose. Sita she must be, thought Hanuman, and stealthily

he climbed up a tree behind her to watch and make sure. Lanka's lord came once again (with spouse and maids of honour) to tempt the weary prisoner under the Asoka tree. But Rama's faithful wife, with eyes cast down (Ill. 63), treated him with contempt and she was doomed to further confinement under the Asoka tree. From the tree-top Hanuman saw Sita, pale and sorrow-stricken, guarded by unseemly Rakshasi women, her raven locks twisted round her neck with intent to take life away rather than surrender to dishonour (Ill. 64). Of Rama's name and fame now Hanuman sang, and Sita saw a monkey perched on a branch of the tree. Slowly he descended, and having made obeisance to fair Sita, spoke of Rama's lament and his weary wanderings. He handed to her the signet ring confided to him by Rama and, exhibiting his mighty expanding powers, offered to carry her on his shoulders back to her lord (Ill. 65). No longer doubting the identity of the messenger with the signet ring, yet wishing for Rama's own hands to release her from captivity, she took from her tresses a token for her distant lord and handed it to Hanuman (Ill. 66). Hanuman now began to ravage the city. He defeated the troops who were sent by Ravana to oppose him, but to Indrajit the son of Ravana he surrendered on purpose to meet face to face the lord of Lanka. Bound hand and foot with ropes he was brought before the Rakshasa king (Ill. 67). Out spoke Hanuman of the king's wrongs with regard to Rama and Sita and the serious consequences of any longer retaining the latter in confinement. The lord of Lanka was highly enraged. His council of ministers decided upon Hanuman's life as the penalty for his wanton havoc. Vibhishana, the Rakshasa king's youngest brother, thought death was too severe a penalty in the case of a royal ambassador and suggested a more lenient punishment. The king's council decided upon his disfiguration by the deprivation of his tail as a lasting memento of the reward for his depredations! With his tail set on fire, after it was wrapped with cotton and soaked in oil, Hanuman was taken round from street to street of the city on a mock parade. Having thus obtained

a clear view of the city the Vanara chieftain broke loose from the ropes that held him and with his flaming tail he leaped from one house-top to another till he devastated the whole town with fire (Ill. 68). Then, extinguishing the fire on his tail by dipping it in the waters of the ocean beyond (Ill. 69), he returned to Sita, and assuring her of immediate steps for her release from the custody of Ravana, he flew back to the mainland to the great delight of his eager expectant comrades (Ill. 70) and they all started for Kishkintha with welcome news of Sita. In their enthusiasm over Hanuman's success the Vanara host broke into the *Madhuvana*—a lovely grove—the pleasure resort of Kishkintha's king. They drank all the honey, clambered the trees, and cheerily, merrily danced and sang (Ill. 71). To king Sugriva ran Dadhimukha, warden of the Madhuvana, complaining of the depredations of the Vanara host (Ill. 72). Thus the merry Vanara host returned to Kishkintha. To Rama, Hanuman handed the token from his sorrowing consort in far distant Lanka (Ill. 73) and related all about his adventures and the finding of Sita. Retribution and restitution was Rama's duty now, and forthwith he began to plan the operations of an expeditionary force to proceed to the shores of the southern seas and thence across to Lanka, led by himself, and accompanied by his brother Lakshmana, Sugriva and Hanuman and the rest of the Vanara host.

YUDDHAKANDA.

Arrived on the shores of the southern seas Rama and his comrades began to consider the ways and means of crossing over to Lanka. Meanwhile at the council of the Rakshasas in Lanka, following on the ravages committed by Hanuman, Vibhishana the youngest brother of Ravana deprecated war with Rama and proposed to the king to restore Sita to her husband rather than court the disaster of an invasion by Rama and the total annihilation of the Rakshasas.

Ravana's eldest son Indrajit, the most valiant of all the Rakshasas, repelled Vibhishana's forebodings as ignoble fear for the enemy and counselled war (Ill. 74). Infuriated over his advise being thus scorned Vibhishana, deserting his brother's royal home and forsaking wife and children and wealth and all, went over, air-borne, followed by four of his courtiers, to the princes of Ayodhya—a friend and suppliant (Ill. 75). Warmly they received him, and in anticipation of Lanka's conquest and the destruction of Ravana and his forces in the impending conflict, Rama, on the ocean's shores, anointed Vibhishana as king-elect of Lanka. Into Rama's camp strayed Suka and Sarana, two spies of Ravana in disguise and, detected by Vibhishana, they were arrested and brought before Rama, but Rama would not lay hands on royal heralds and set them free (Ill. 76). Consulted by Rama as to how to reach Lanka across the waters, Vibhishana advised that the Sea-God be propitiated for his consent to throw a bridge athwart. Rama lay recumbent on a bed of sacred grass by the ocean's shore, invoking the Sea-God to give him way for it (Ill. 77). Enraged at the Ocean-God's seeming indifference to his prayer Rama seized his mighty bow and prepared to launch the Brahmahasthra across the foaming billows when the *Samudra Deva* appeared and yielded his assent (Ill. 78). The Vanaras uprooted huge rocks and gigantic trees and cast them into the waters and in the space of five days, with the aid of Nala the architect of the Devatas, they connected the island with the mainland by a stupendous bridge (Ill. 79). With Sugriva and Vibhishana, Rama walked along the new bridge, the Vanaras in endless numbers following him exultant (Ill. 80) until they reached the heights of the Suvala mountain. Suka and Sarana, the liberated spies of Ravana, returned with tidings of the brave and countless Vanara host that filled every valley, hill and plain on their way to and fro, and of Rama's prodigious might and matchless weapons of warfare, but Ravana heeded them not (Ill. 81). In the shades of a moonlit night Rama, with Sugriva, Jumbavan and Vibhishana, descried the whole city from the

heights of Suvala and arranged his forces in position. Ravana from his palace-top viewed the advancing foe. Suka and Sarana pointed out each leader and his force (Ill. 82). To Ravana came Angadha with Rama's *ultimatum*—the surrender of Sita unconditionally or hostilities towards that end and the consequences thereof. Ravana brought a pair of magic heads and bows and quivers miraculously resembling those of Rama and Lakshmana, and placing them before the melancholy Sita, endeavoured to persuade her to believe that the royal princes were slain in battle and their forces beat a hasty retreat (Ill. 83). Through the air Sugriva descended to the roof-top where stood Ravana, and snatching the royal crowns and dashing them to the ground he quickly returned to Suvala's heights (Ill. 84). Angadha, in delivering the *ultimatum* from Rama, fell into the enemy's hands. With his mighty arms he seized the captors and hurling them to the ground he ascended to regions high (Ill. 85). Hostilities proceeded in right earnest now. Safe in his magic shroud of mist came Indrajit (the son of Ravana) pouring down torrents of his deadly darts of *Nagapasa*. Unconscious fell the Raghu brothers by Nagapasa's noose (Ill. 86). In the affray appeared Garuda, lord of the feathered tribe. Instantly the Naga (serpent) shafts vanished and the disabled Raghu brothers were revived (Ill. 87). "Pray, who art thou, O mighty one," exclaimed Rama. "Garuda, your friend," responded the king of birds (Ill. 88). Strewn with countless dead bodies was the field of battle now. Struck with an arrow from Ravana's divinely bestowed bow Lakshmana fainted and fell (Ill. 89). Riding on Hanuman's shoulders with his ever resourceful quiver of shafts, Rama spied Ravana in his chariot. He slew his steeds and rent the coronets on his heads (Ill. 90). For mighty Kumbhakarna's aid the Rakshasas ran, but he lay in slumbers deep. With elephants' roar, with din of human wail, with blow of horn and beat of drum, the Rakshasa chieftains roused Kumbhakarna from his deep lethargy (Ill. 91). At the sight of the gigantic form of the mighty Kumbhakarna the Vanara forces fled in fear and despair (Ill. 92) but Sugriva fell

upon the mighty monster. He bit off his monstrous nose and tore his ears away. Bleeding, like torrents bloody gushing from mountain-top to valleys underneath, yet victorious, Kumbhakarna dashed through the scattered forces of Sugriva. Rama let fly a shaft that rent his arm and cut off his legs (Ill. 93). Once more came Indrajit upon the scene of battle, this time with an effigy of fair Sita—the handiwork of his magic powers—and seizing the lovely form by the hair smote it down with his sword (Ill. 94) thus hoping to perform undisturbed his *Nikimbhila* sacrifice. With rites ordained by sacred texts Indrajit entered upon a worship of the God of Fire and the sacrifice of a sheep. Three nights and three days was he engaged therewith. Secretly led by Vibhishana, Lakshmana surprised him in his magic rites (Ill. 95). For as many days and nights during his sacrifice did Lakshmana keep up a ceaseless flow of arrows at him. Each warrior worthy of his foe fought long and well till Ravana's steed was laid low, and the dash of a fatal shaft from Lakshmana's bow splintered that of his adversary and laid low the son of Ravana—Indrajit, the most valiant of all the Rakshasas—the terror of the Devatas (Ill. 96). With reinforcements came Ravana now in person to the field of battle. He first retaliated by persecuting the fair forlorn maiden at the foot of the Asoka tree, but desisted upon wiser counsels prevailing from his comrade Suparswa, and then marched against Rama and his redoubtable army of Vanars. Once more did Rama lay the Brahmahasthra on his cord. As quick as lightning the dart pierced Ravana's chest and the fierce lord of Lanka perished on the plain, each widowed queen standing round her fallen lord and weeping over his mortal frame (Ill. 97).

Thus ended the fate of Ravana, and Vibhishana, the pre-ordained king of Lanka by Rama's choice, sat on its throne and Lakshmana poured waters from the sacred Ganges in holy consecration of the new king (Ill. 98).

To the rescue of the fair maiden under the Asoka tree went Hanuman and the conquering heroes. Infuriated at the repulsive sight of the Rakshasis who

kept watch there, Hanuman would have laid cruel hands on them but for the timely interposition of Sita (Ill. 99). With measured steps, amid an eager and excited crowd, walked Sita gently to the presence of her long separated lord and husband (Ill. 100.) Absent from him so long, he feared her chastity was outraged. Sita read his mind and to prove her virtue unstained and her high devotion to duty as wife she plunged into the flames of a newly lighted pyre (Ill. 101). The flames rolled back and *Agni Deva* raised Sita gently in her hands—not a curl of her hair singed nor a blossom withered.

Back to his bosom Rama received his faithful spouse and in an aerial car (Pushpaka Vimana) the exiles quitted the field of war for fair Ayodhya their fatherland with Sugriva and Vibhishana (Ill. 103). Disguised went Hanuman to Bharata who in hermit's garb, pale and care-worn, was still in reverence prostrate before the sandals of his brother Rama (Ill. 104). With joy unbounded went he forth to meet Rama and Sita, carrying the sandals of Rama on his head, amidst a pompous array of pious purohits and noblemen and all the citizens of Ayodhya (Ill. 105). The Pushpaka Vimana descended gently from the air, and Bharata, placing the sandals at Rama's feet, prayed him to assume charge of his crown and kingdom. The assembly placed Rama on his father's ancient throne. Purohits brought water from each holy sea and sacred stream and poured it on their king (Ill. 107). Rama and Sita sat on the jewelled throne of Ayodhya; Satrughna held the milk-white umbrella over them, while Sugriva and Vibhishana waved the gem-laid chowries on either side. Men in nations hailed Rama as their lord and righteous king, and for time immemorial Rama ruled the destinies of the ancient House of Ayodhya with his noble consort Sita.

FINIS



1. Valmiki, moved with pity at the death of the Crouncha bird pronounces his curse on the hunter in a sloka.



2. Lava and Kusa, youthful sons of Rama, came to the court of their father and sang the Lay of the Ramayana from first to last.



3. Childless Dasaratha performing the "Putra Kamashti" sacrifice in order to be blessed with children.



4. Forth from the sacrificial fire rose a mighty form of matchless splendour with a vase of gold that held the impregnating nectar. The king reverently received the bowl and gave it to his consorts.



5. Dasaratha reluctant to send his sons with Viswamithra to his Asrama.



6. Viswamithra teaching Rama and Lakshmana the use of the Bow.



7. Under the guidance of the Royal Rishi, Rama aims his bow at the Demon Thataka.



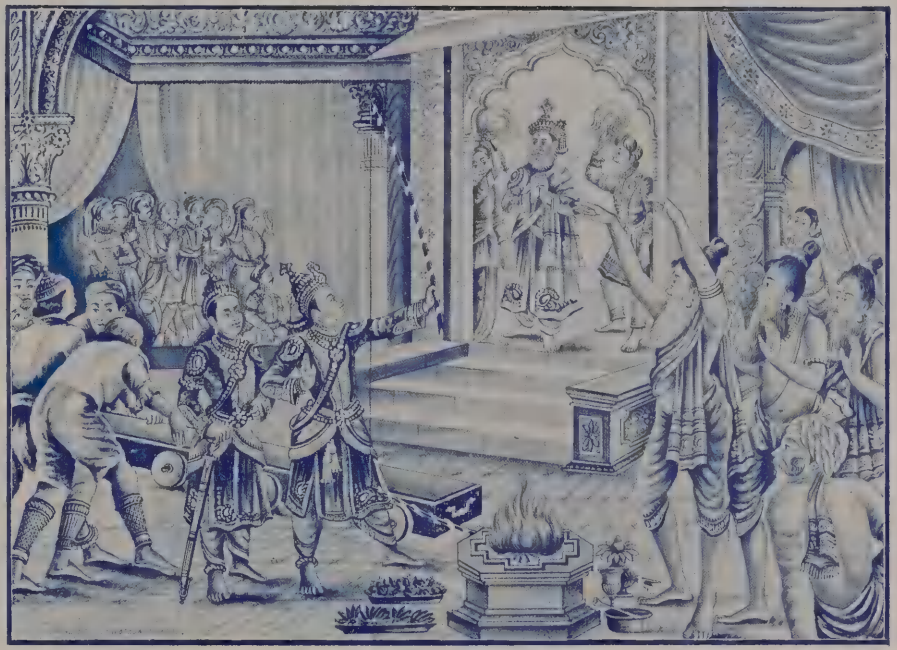
8. Maricha and Subahu, two fiends, poured a thick rain of blood on the holy head of Viswamitra. The valiant princes, seeing the sacrilegious crime, shot them down.



9. With arms upraised, resting on a single toe, Bhagiratha stood praying for Ganga's waters. Descending first on Siva's head the river of heaven rushed down to the earth in ceaseless flow and branched off in seven noble streams.



10. Ahalya, the erring wife of Gouthama, restored to life at the touch of Rama's feet.



11. Rama lifted the ponderous bow with a warrior's grace and drew the string with such resistless force that the weapon snapped in two.



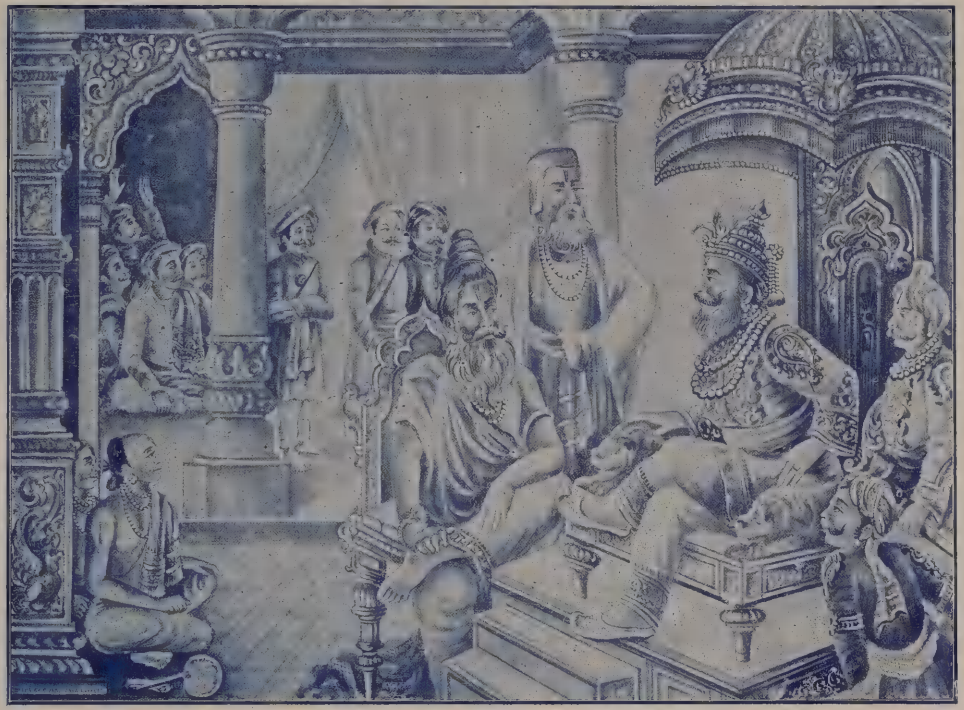
12. Rama weds the sweet-eyed Sita, the proud and peerless princess of Mithila, the daughter of Janaka.



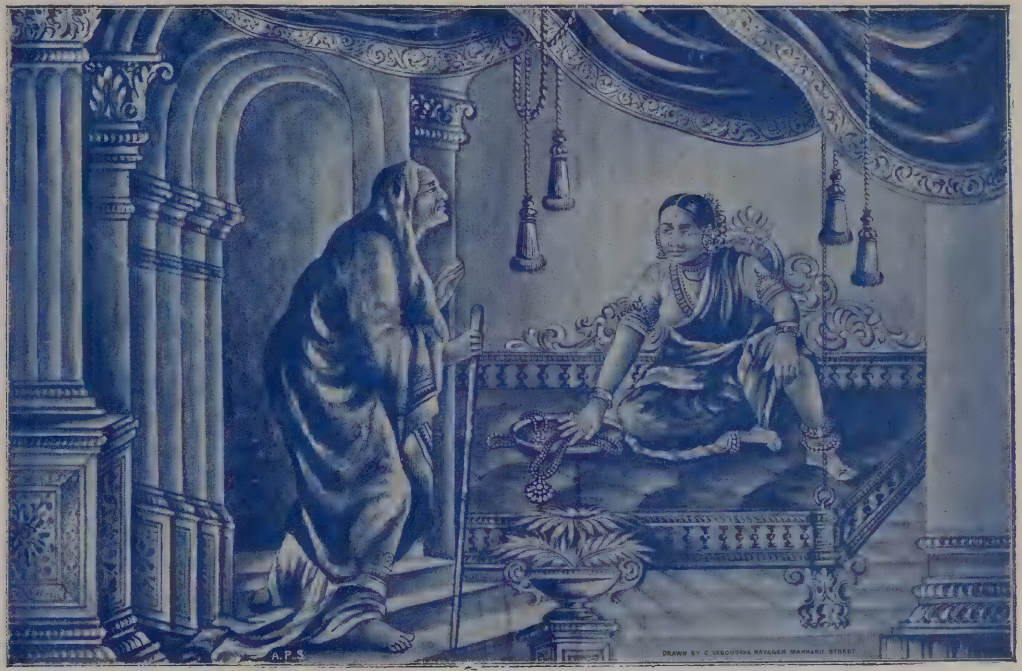
13. Undeterred by the haughty challenge of the furious son of Jamadhagni, Rama set the arrow to the bow. Parasurama bewildered over the youth's daring.



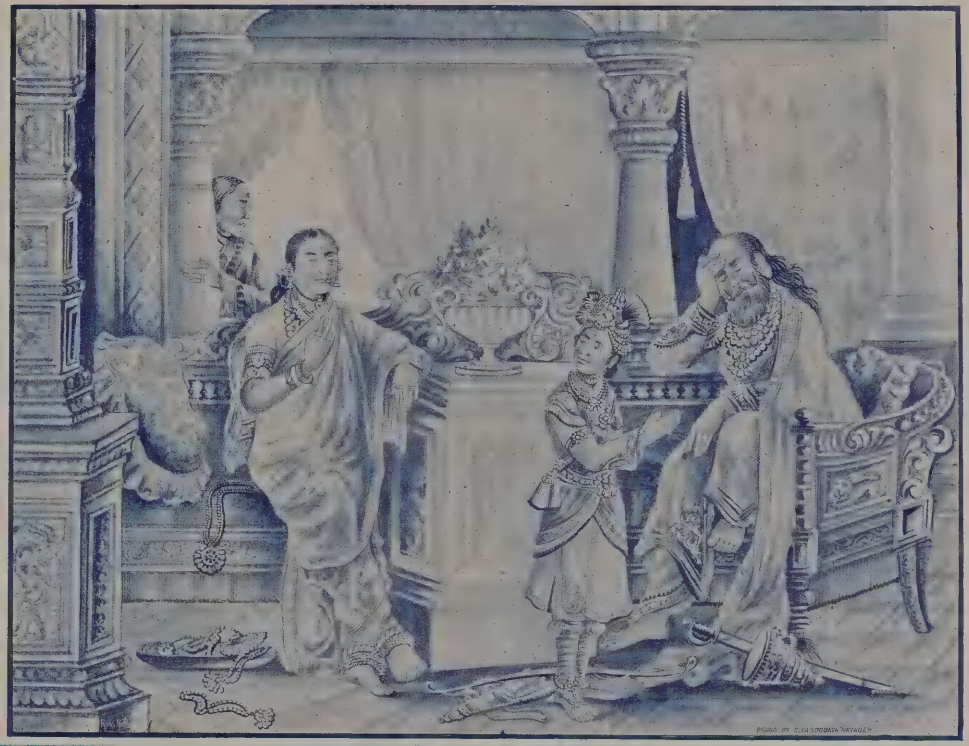
14. With his consort, pious Rama went to the temple of Narayana to keep the fast and vigils ordained by Vasishta.



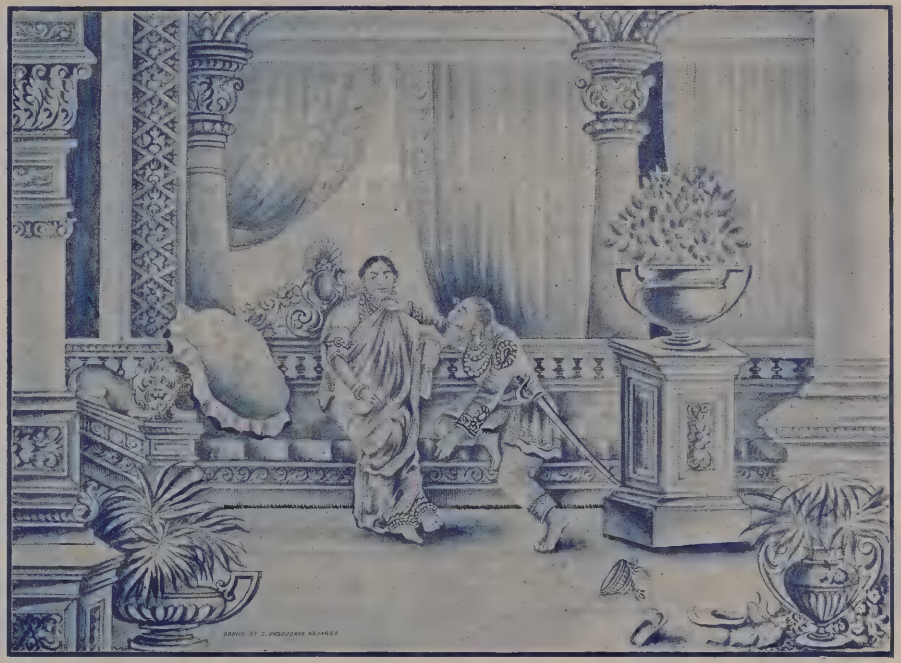
15. Dasaratha summoned his subjects from town and country, far and near, and proposed the anointment of Rama, his eldest born, as King Regent.



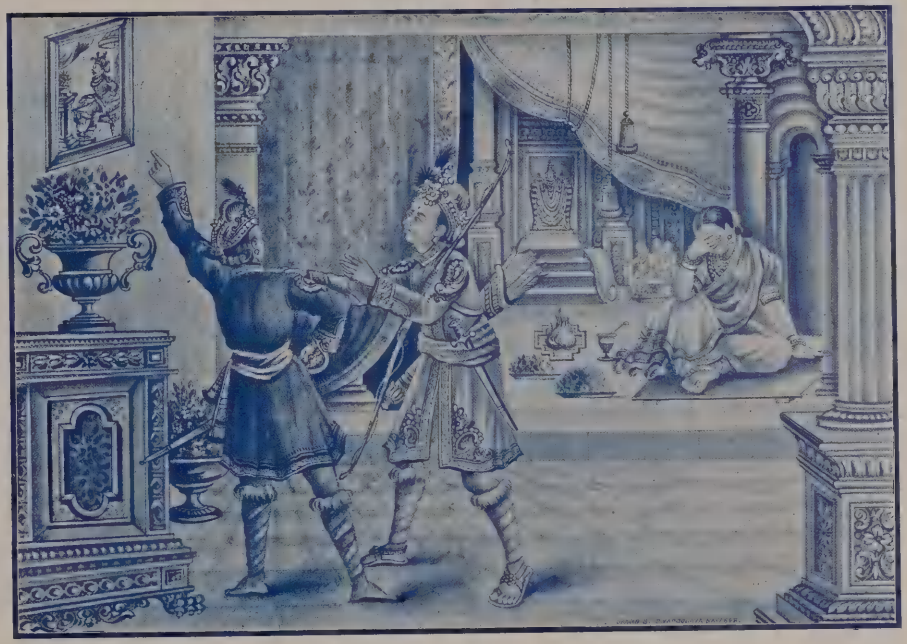
16. Wily Manthara inducing Queen Kaikeyi to demand the Empire for her own son.



17. Queen Kaikeyi demands two boons—the coronation of her own son Bharatha and the banishment of Rama to the forest for fourteen years.



18. Grieved by Kaikeyi's traitorous demand the Monarch begs her to ask for other boons.



19. Kausalya in tears. Enraged at the Monarch's cruel command Lakshmana threatens his father's life but Rama counsels him.



20. At dawn Rama, Sita and Lakshmana repair to the Palace to take farewell of the sorrowing King.



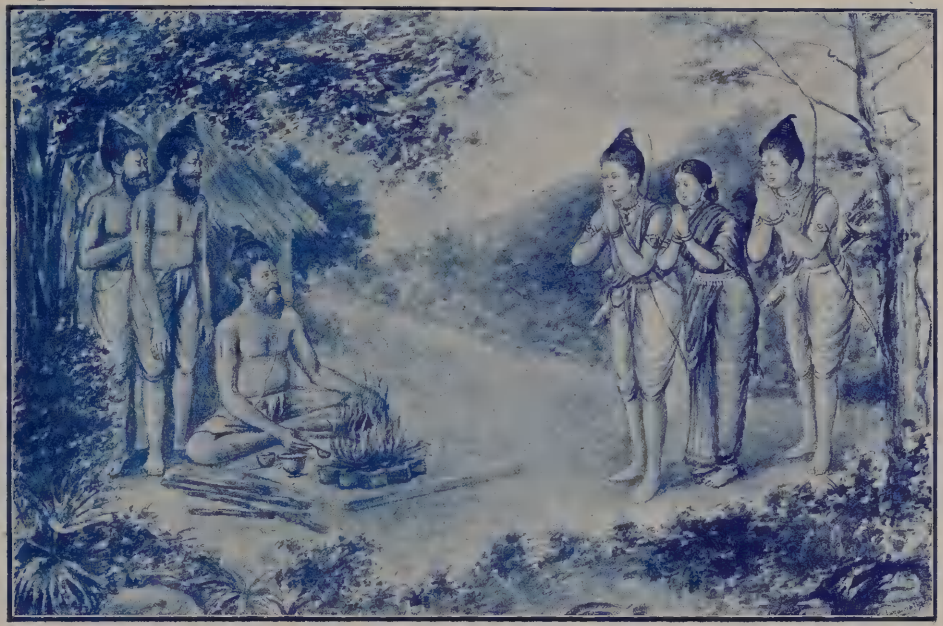
21. With Sita, the two brothers set out to the wilderness. Weeping and wailing, the loving subjects follow the car.



22. Wearing matted tresses and coats of bark the exiles cross the Ganges in a boat of the Nishada Chief. Faithful Sumantra stands sorrowing on the bank.



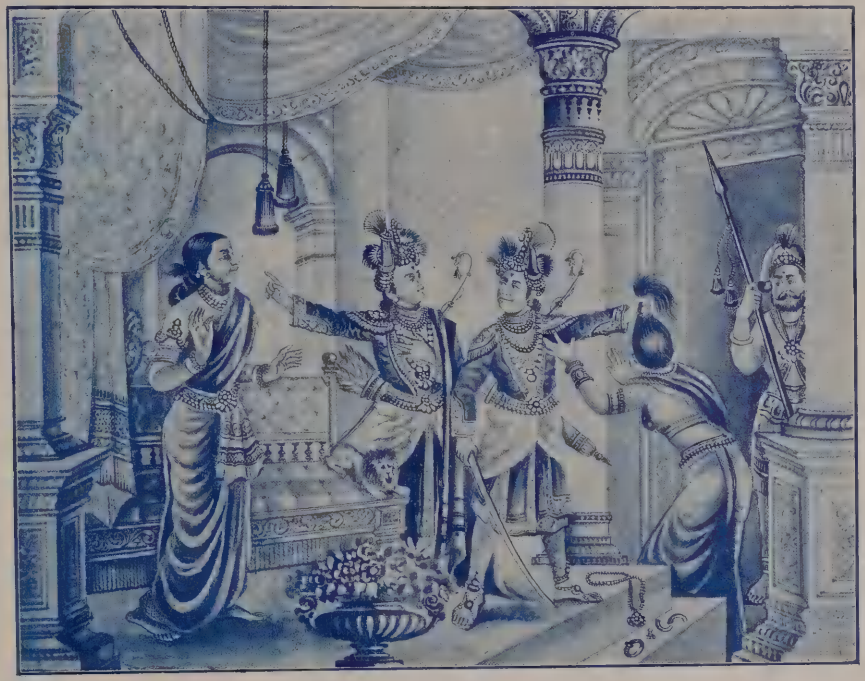
23. The exiles spend the first night of their endless wanderings under a Baniyan tree on a mat of Kusa grass.



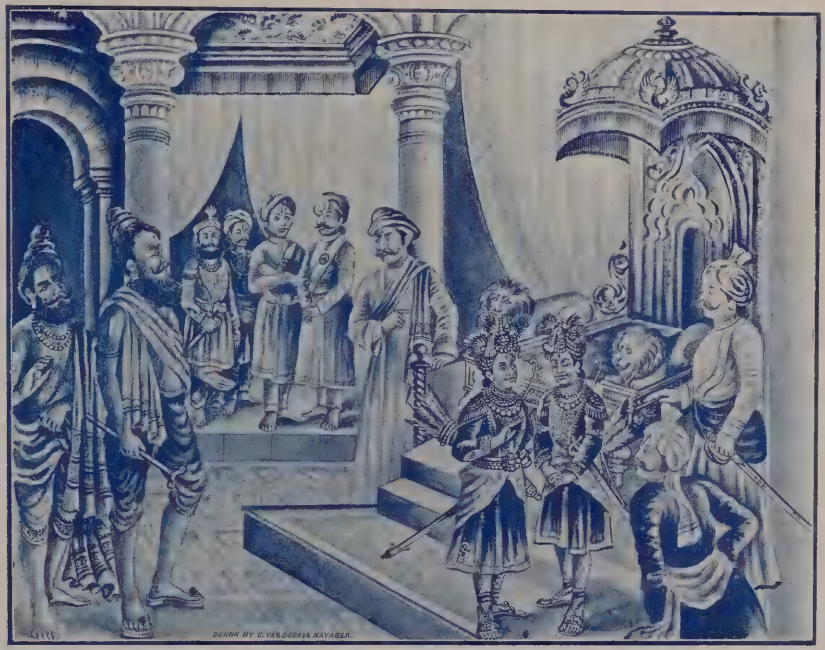
24. Wandering through the fair woodlands they met holy Bharadhwaja and many another anchorite.



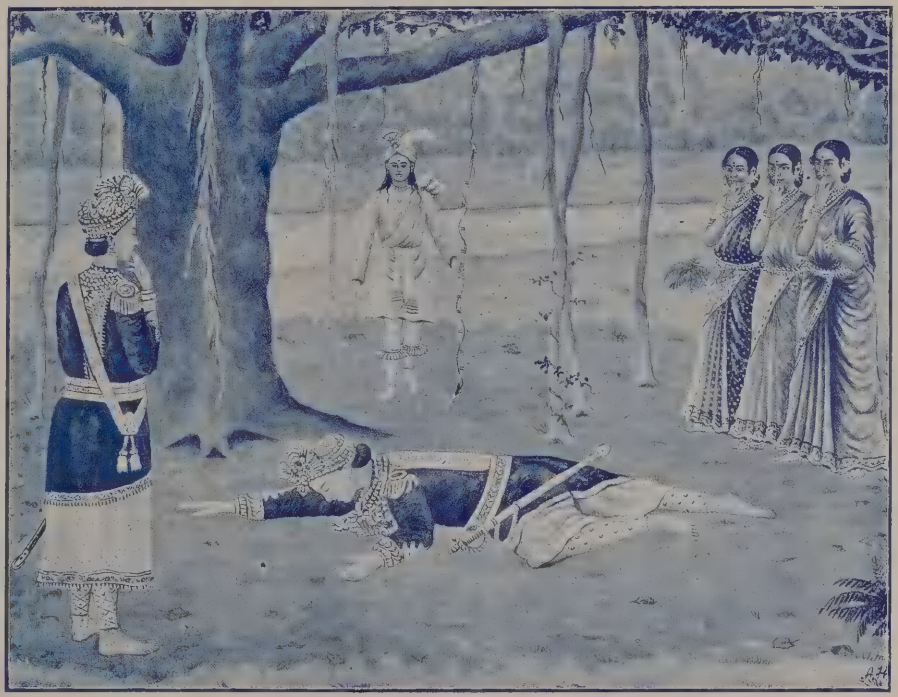
25. Bharatha, returning from the Kingdom of the Kaikayas, prostrtates before his mother Kaikeyi.



26. Burning with rage Satrugna dragged the shrieking Manthara and broke her bangles and chains. Bharatha denounces his mother for her deed of shame.



27. Bharatha and Satrugna decide to go to the forest and ask Rama to return to his kingdom and people.



28. With each widowed Queen the brothers sought the exiles through the tractless jungle. Overcome with fatigue Bharatha faints.



29. Onwards still they went and met the sage Bharadwaja from whom they heard of Rama's whereabouts.



30. The eager multitude from Ayodhia saw rising high the hut thatched with leaves and twining branches. Lakshmana sees them from a tree-top.



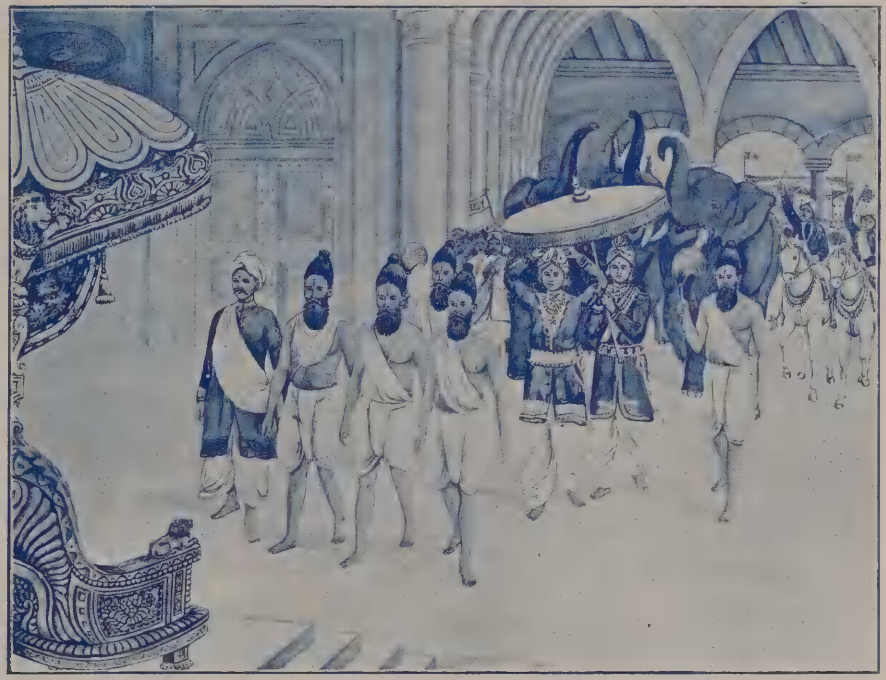
31. At Chitrakuta, before the feet of Rama the Brothers prostrate themselves in loving homage.



32. Rama and Lakshmana hear of their father's death and perform obsequies in the river Mandakini.



33. Bharatha returns to Ayodhia with the sandals of his brother as a token of Rama's supremacy over the kingdom.



34. Bharatha devoutly carrying Rama's sandals on his head to be enthroned at Nandigrama.



35. Viradha, a hideous monster, raised the princes to his shoulders and dashed across the woods. The brothers drew their swords and severed his arms.



36. Sarabanga, a holy sage of saintly virtue, consigned his mortal coil to the flames and, transformed into a youth of radiant hue, ascended to heaven in a celestial car.



37. Rama rejected with scorn the love of the Rakshasi maiden Surpanaka, sister of Ravana.



38. As the furious Rakshasi maiden rushed at Sita, Lakshmana with his sword cleft her nose and ears.



39. Disfigured and humiliated, Surpanaka told her tale of woe to her Rakshasa brother.



40. Sita beheld a wonderful deer of golden hue browsing and entreated her husband to capture it. Lakshmana warned that "'tis some deceitful Rakshasa in a shape assumed at will."



41. Pierced by Rama's deadly shaft Maricha (the seeming deer) fell. Calling aloud "Save me Lakshmana, or I die" in Rama's feigned accents, he breathed his last.



42. The ten-headed Ravana, Rakshasa King, Lord of Lanka, approached Sita with impious purpose. Sita treated him with scorn and warned him of Rama's unrelenting vengeance.



43. Jatayu, King of Vultures, attacked Ravana with irresistible force, fought with beak and talons, rent his hair and wrecked the royal car.



44. The brothers returned, and searched and looked all around, but, alas! nowhere was Sita to be found.



45. As the brothers vainly pursued their search through wood and dale they saw Jatayu gasping on the ground, a pile of feathers with wings hewn down, and from his dying accents heard of Ravana's flight with Sita.



46. The Princes were quickly caught in the hands of Kabandha, a headless monster with a mighty trunk, and arms a league in length. They cut off his arms and made him helpless.



47. Roaming through the woods, they met the aged Sabari, who with fruits and water welcomed the royal guests.

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48. With troubled heart the Princes reached the banks of the Pampa.



49. Sent by Sugriva, the banished King of Kishkintha, Hanuman approached the brothers, in the guise of an ascetic.



50. Hanuman resumed his natural shape and returned to Sugriva with the Princes on his ponderous shoulders.



51. With many a sob and sigh Rama recognised the robe and ornaments of Sita picked up by the Vanaras from the forest.



52. Rama lightly touched the huge corpse of Dhundubhi with his foot and it flew 20 leagues through the air.



53. Rama cleft the seven Sala trees in line with a single arrow which pierced through the hill that rose behind.



54. With fierce and unrelenting wrath the Vanara brothers wrestled and fought, while Rama, from behind a tree, aimed at Vali, his comrade's foe.



55. Pierced by the shaft of Rama, the mighty Vali fell. Rama and Lakshmana appeared on the scene. Tara beat her breast and wept aloud over her fallen lord.



56. The Vanaras brought water from every holy river and sea, and with vessels of gold poured the secred waters on Sugriva in holy consecration.



57. Enraged at Sugriva's inactive slumber Lakshmana rushed to the palace where Tara assuaged his anger and led him to her lord's presence.



58. The Vanaras, one and all, tightly holding Hanuman's tail entered a yawning cavern, and wandered through the gloom in eager search.



58 A. The Vanaras came upon a strange place, a wonderful garden of golden trees, with lotus-covered pools and stately houses of burnished gold, and met a woman the "self-luminant" Swayamprabha.



59. Wingless Sampathy, Jatayu's brother, seeing the monkey host dying in despair, approached them and heard their sad tale.



60. Sampathy described the course of Ravana's flight with Sita, and with wings restored rose and flew away.



61. To the sea the Vanara host quickly ran and each declared his might to leap across the roaring deep.



62. Across the boundless ocean Hanuman flew.



63. Sita scorns Ravana's covert proposal and is kept in confinement in the Asoka garden, watched by Rakshasis.



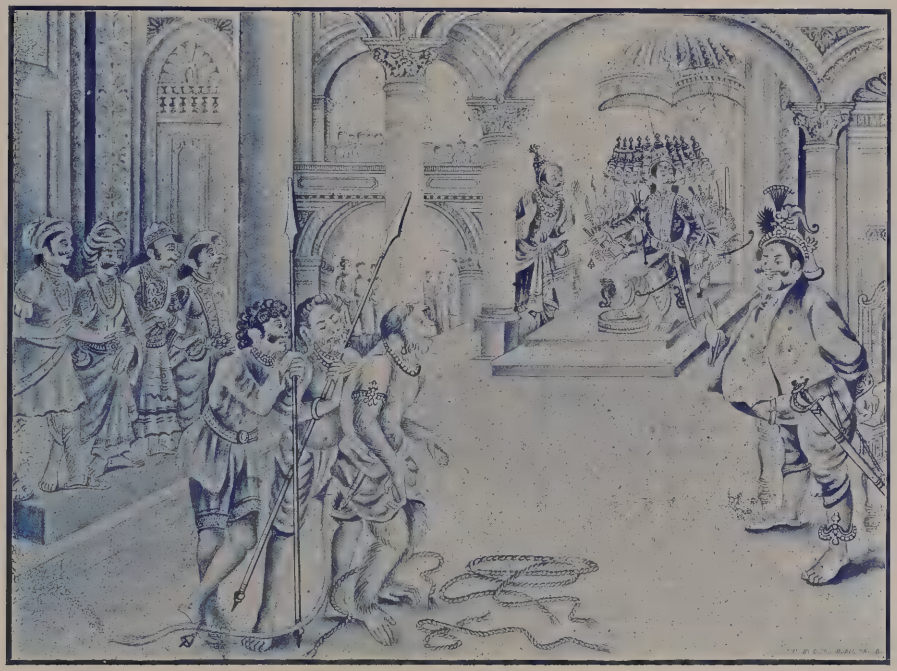
64. From the tree-top Hanuman saw Sita, pale and sorrow-stricken, guarded by Rakshasis, her raven locks twisted round her neck, intent on death.



65. Hanuman spoke of Rama's lament and his weary wanderings. He showed his mighty expanding power and offered to carry Sita on his shoulders back to her lord.



66. From her tresses she took a token and gave it to Hanuman for her distant consort.



67. Hanuman, bound hand and foot, was brought before the Rakshasa lord.



68. The Vanar with his flaming tail leapt from one house-top to another and set the whole town on fire.



69. Having set Lanka on fire Hanuman calmly quenched his burning tail in the ocean waves.



70. Hanuman crossed once more the broad ocean and met his eager expectant comrades.



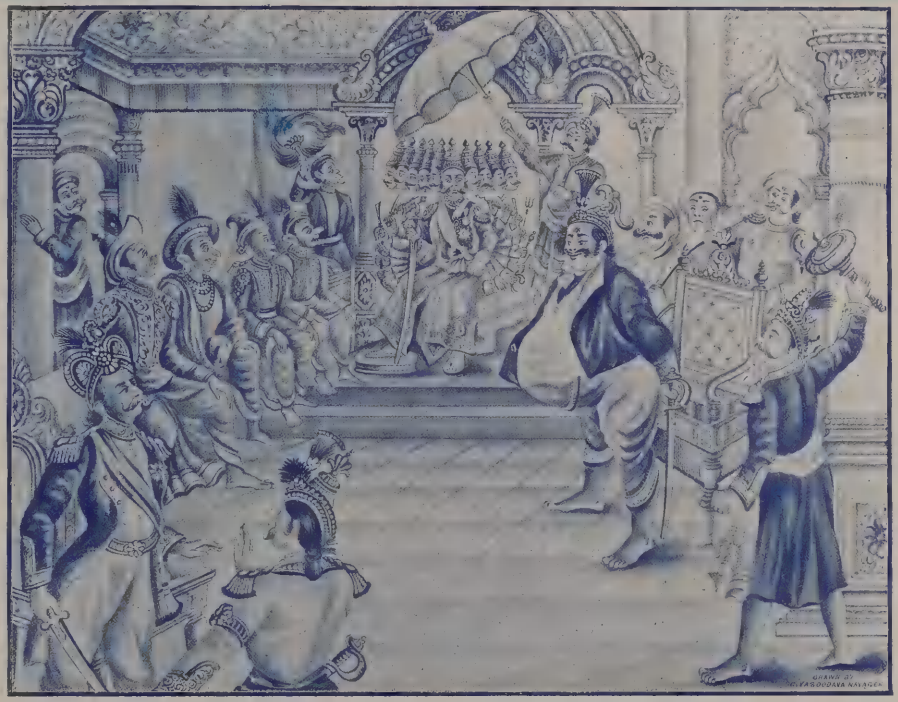
71. In their enthusiasm over Hanuman's success the Vanaras broke into the Madhuvana, a lovely grove, drank the honey, climbed the trees and merrily danced and sang.



72. To King Sugriva, Dadhimukha, warden of the Madhuvana, quickly ran and complained of the depredations of the Vanara host.



73. To Rama, Hanuman gave the token from his sorrowing consort in distant Lanka.



74. At the Council of the Rakshasas, Ravana's son Indrajit, the mightiest of them all, repelled Vibhishana's warnings as ignoble fear for the enemy and counselled war.



75. Vibhishana deserted his brother's royal home and, air-borne, went over to the Princes of Ayodhia—a friend and suppliant.



76. The Vanaras seized Ravana's spy and led him before Rama, who would not slay a herald and let him off.



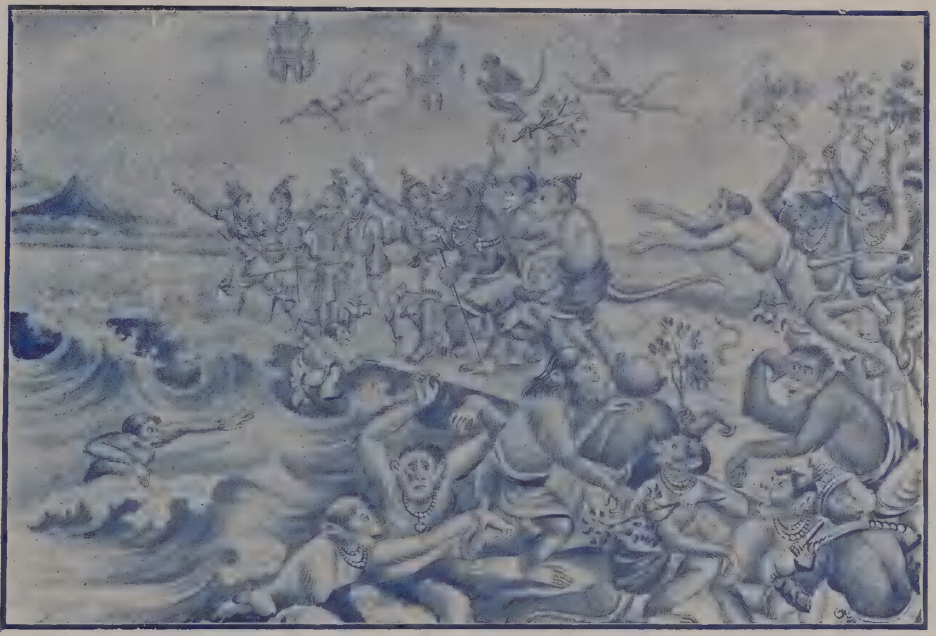
77. Rama lay recumbent on a bed of sacred grass by the ocean-shore and invoked the Sea-God to lend him way.



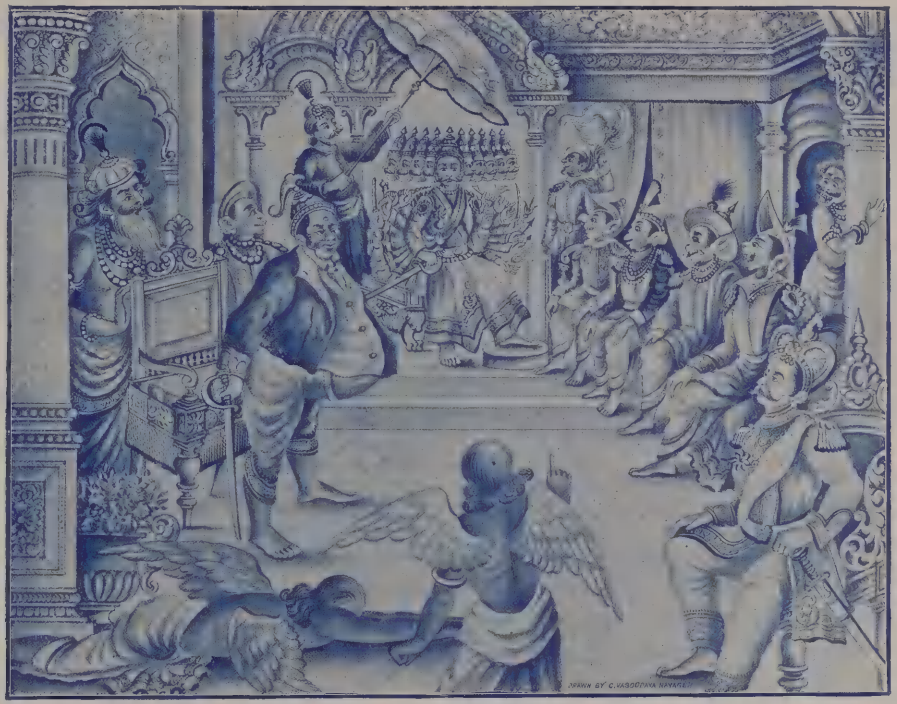
78. Enraged at the ocean's calm indifference Rama seized his mighty bow and prepared to launch the Brahma Asthra across the foaming billows when the Sea-God appeared and spoke.



79. The Vanaras uprooted huge rocks and gigantic trees and cast them into the waters, and built a stupendous bridge across the ocean.



80. With Sugriva and Vibhishana, Rama walked across the new bridge and the Vanara host in endless numbers followed them exultant.



81. Suka and Sarana, the Spies of Ravana, returned with tidings of the bold and countless Vanara hosts that filled every valley, hill and plain, and of Rama's wonderful might and matchless weapons.



82. Ravana mounted the palace roof and viewed the advancing foe. Sarana pointed out each leader and his army.



83. Ravana brought a pair of magic heads and bows and quivers marvelously resembling those of Rama and his brother and, placing them before the melancholy Sita, announced Rama's death and the flight of his army.



84. Through the air Sugriva descended to the roof where stood Ravana,
and snatching the Royal Crowns dashed them down.
Joyous he quickly returned to Suvala's heights.



85. Angadha delivered the message of Rama and, when attacked, with his mighty hands he seized the captors and, hurling them to the ground, sprang up into the skies.



86. Well concealed in his magic shroud of mist Indrajit poured down torrents of his deadly darts of *Nagapasa*. Unconscious the Raghu brothers fell fastened by a noose of *Nagapasa*.



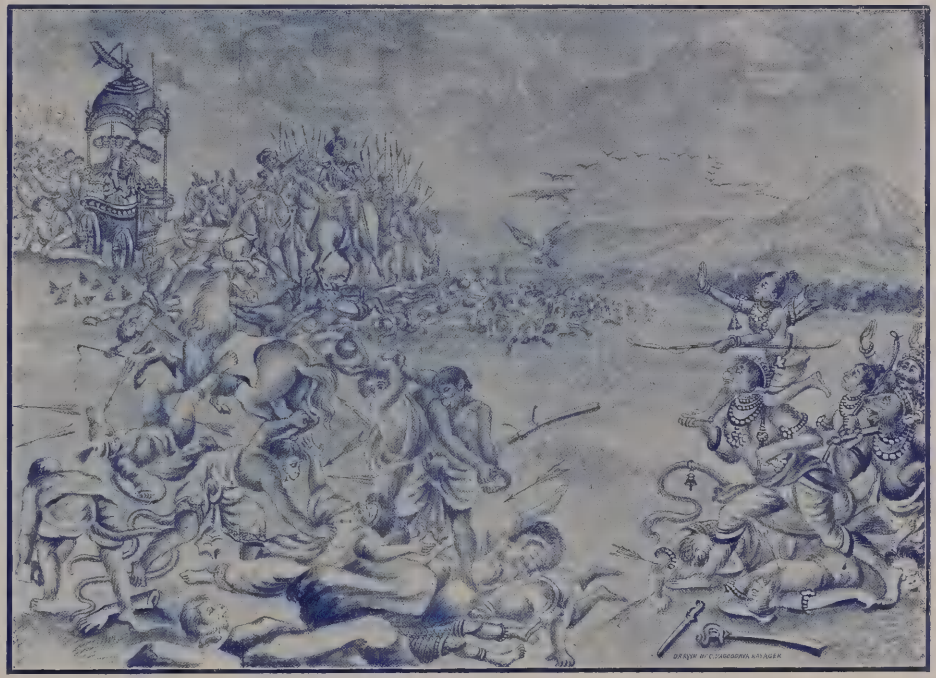
87. On the scene appeared Garuda, lord of the feathered kind.
Instantly the serpent shafts vanished, and the brothers revived.



88. "Pray, who art thou, O mighty being?" exclaimed Rama. "Garuda, your friend," answered the King of birds.



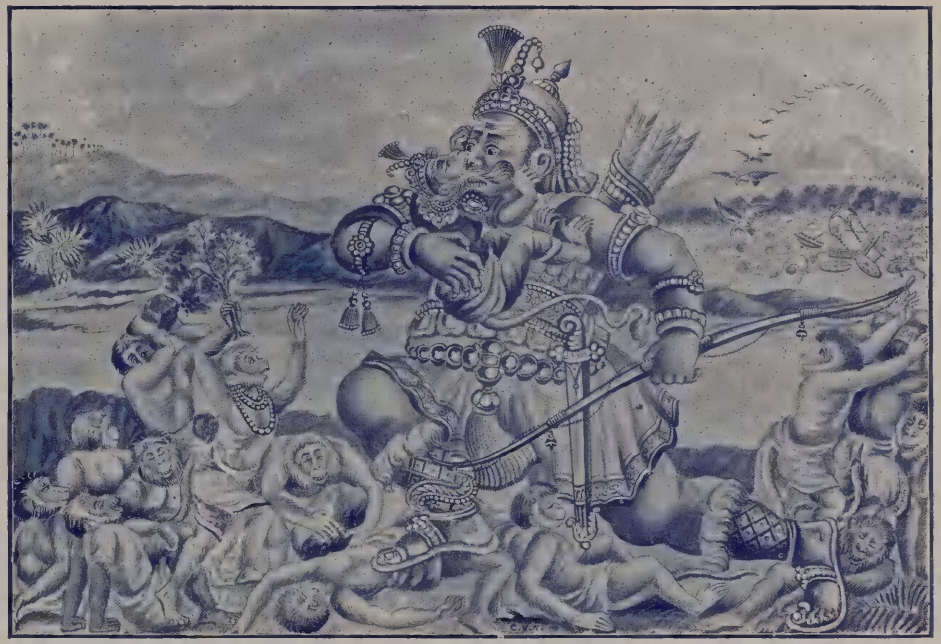
89. Struck with an arrow from Ravana's divinely-bestowed bow Lakshmana fainted and fell.



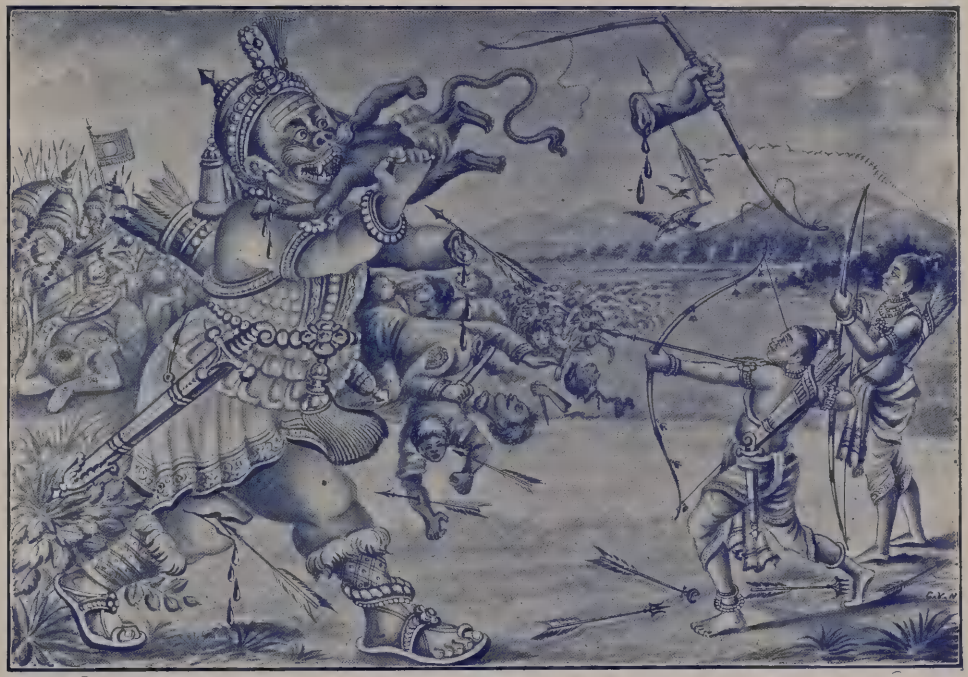
90. Riding on Hanuman's back Rama, armed with his ever resourceful shafts, spied Ravana in his chariot, slew the steeds, and knocked the coronets off his head.



91. With the roaring of elephants and the shouts of the mutitude, with blow of horn and beat of drum, the Rakshasa chieftains roused Kumbhakarna from his wonted slumber.



92. At the sight of the gigantic form of Kumbhakarna the Vanara forces fled in fear, but Sugriva fell upon the monster, bit his nose off and tore his ears away.



93. As Kumbhakarna was dashihg along victoriously through the scattered forces of Sugriva Rama let fly a shaft that tore his arm and cut his legs away.



94. Indrajit once again appeared on the battle-field, bearing an image of Sita—the handiwork of his magic powers—and, seizing the lovely form by the hair, smote it down with his sword.



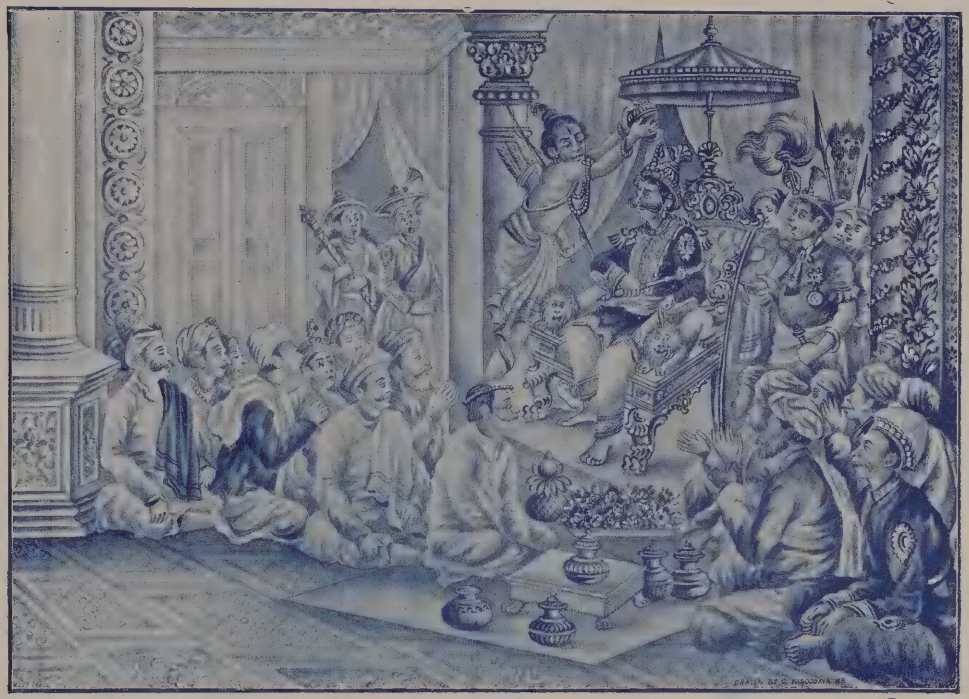
95. With due rites as ordained in the sacred texts Indrajit worshipped the God of Fire and sacrificed a sheep. Secretly led by Vibhishana, Lakshmana surprised him in his magic rites.



96. Each warrior worthy of his foe fought long and well, till Lakshmana slew the steeds of Indrajit, splintered his bow and severed his head.



97. Rama once more laid the *Brahma Astra* on the cord; quick like lightning the dart pierced Ravana's chest and the lord of Lanka lay dead on the plain. Each widowed queen stood round her fallen lord and sorely wept.



98. Vibhishana sat on the throne of Lanka and with an urn of gold Lakshmana poured the holy waters on his head.



99. With vengeance Hanuman rushed to slay the Rakshasa guards but Sita stopped him and saved them all.



100. Slowly through the wild and eager throng that pressed on either side, Sita came,



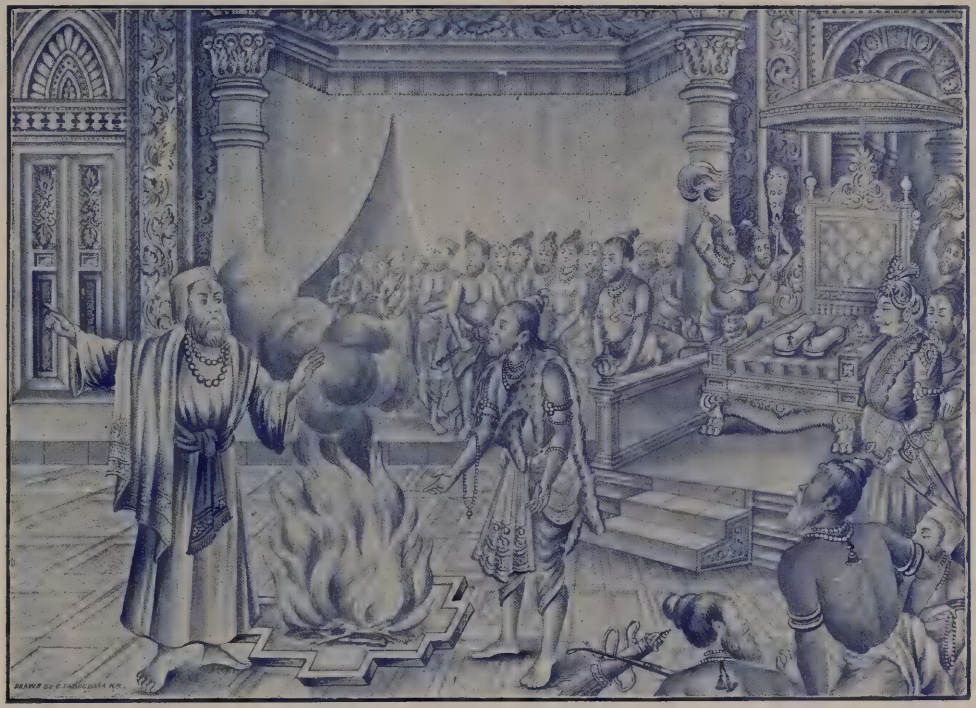
101. To prove her stainless virtue and her high devotion, Sita stepped into the rolling flames of a newly lighted pyre.



102. The flames rolled back and the God of Fire incarnate, holding Sita in his hands, gently raised her up—not a curl of her hair singed, not a blossom withered.



103. On a Pushpaka Vimana the exiles left the field of war and returned to fair Ayodhia, their father-land, with Sugriva and Vibhishana.



104. Garbed in human form, Hanuman came to Bharat, who in hermit's dress, pale and careworn, revered still the sandals of his brother.



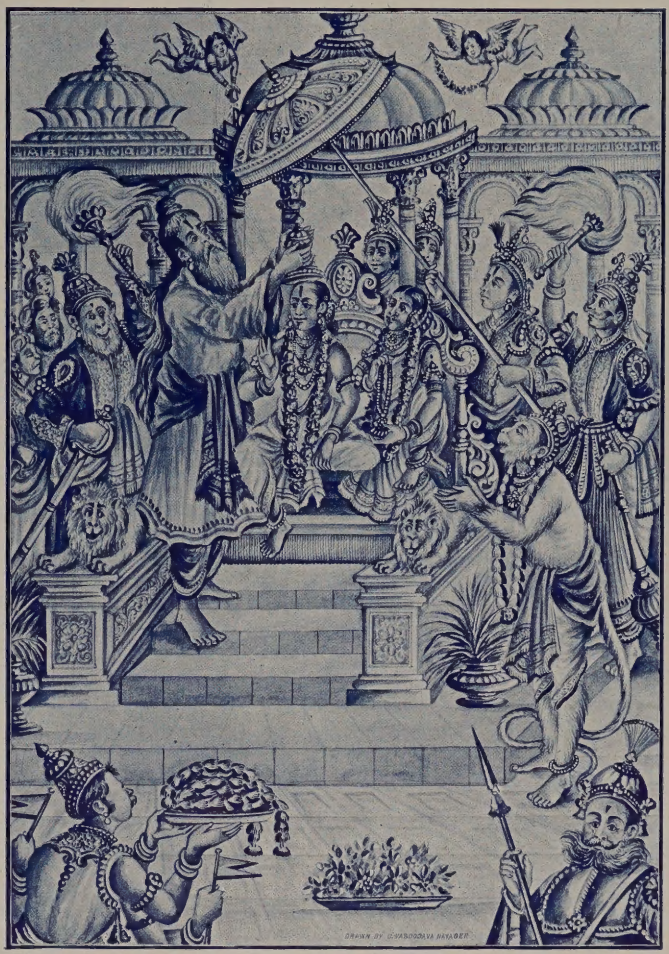
105. Overwhelmed with joy at the news of the return of Rama and Sita, Bharata went forth to greet them, still bearing Rama's sandals on his head, and surrounded by a pompous array of pious priests and noblemen and all the citizens of Ayodhia.



106. The Pushpakavimana slowly descended from the air, and Bharata, placing the sandals at the feet of Rama, prayed him to assume the crown and rule the kingdom.



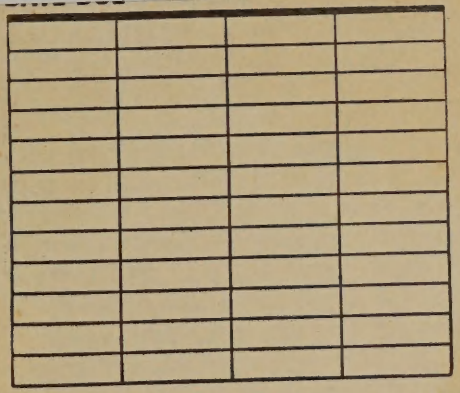
107. They placed Rama on his father's ancient throne. The priests brought water from each holy sea and sacred stream and poured it on their king.



108. Rama with his consort sat on the jeweled throne of fair Ayodhia, Satrugna held the milk-white umbrella, while Sugriva and Vibhishana waved the gem-laid Chowries on either side. Men in nations hailed Rama as their lord and righteous king.

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